

Seattle Police Email Community Newsletter

October 30, 2012



Dear Community Friends,

Crime Deterrence During The Cool Weather Months

As the weather cools and our hours of daylight get shorter, we wanted to give you just a few reminders about what you can do to help deter burglary and car prowls in your neighborhoods.

Home Security

- Lock your doors and windows any time you are away from your home. You'd be surprised how many burglars come through an open or unlocked door or window, even in the cool weather months.
- Be Visible. Let people know that neighbors pay attention and watch out for each other. You can do this in a very simple way; say hello. When you see your neighbors on your block, wave and say "Hi." When you see people you don't know on your block, wave and say "Hi." This sends the message that you are engaged, that you are observant and that you acknowledge the presence of those you see. As people who are looking to break into a car or a home don't want to draw attention to themselves, letting them know that they've been seen and acknowledged will likely make them go elsewhere.
- Because it is getting darker earlier, many of us who work during the day arrive home after dark. Having good lighting around the exterior of your home gives you good visibility of your home when you approach, and it gives your neighbors good visibility of your home so they can spot anything out of the norm during the time you are away. Have porch lights on from dusk until dawn. For the front or main entrance to your home, consider having the lights on a photo-cell sensor (when it gets dark, the light comes on, when it becomes daylight again, the light goes off) or put the lights on a timer. For the side and rear areas of your home, consider motion sensor lights. Also, as some neighborhood streets do not have sufficient street lighting and are very dark, it is even more important to turn on porch lights from dusk until dawn so the street is better illuminated and you can better see what's happening outside. For those who live in apartment buildings or condos, ensure that the landlord or property management company is aware of and repairs any inoperative lights.
- Be wary of strangers at the door. We often have people going door-to-door asking for assistance, giving a story of running out of gas, of needing to catch a bus to *[insert name of destination here]*, of a car broken down... all pleas to tug at the heartstrings to get you to give them money. These are often scams, not only to get your money, but to check to see if someone is home. Burglars often knock first to see if anyone answers the door. If no answer, they attempt to break in. Bottom line; if someone comes to the door, answer it. Let the person on the other side of the door know that someone is home. That doesn't mean open the door. Talk to them through the door, don't worry about appearing rude. This is about your safety and deterring a crime, not about the other person's feelings.

Car Prowl Prevention

- Often a car is broken in to because something is left in plain view; a briefcase, a computer bag, a GPS.... The most effective way to prevent your vehicle from being broken in to is to not leave anything of value visible in the car. To the maximum extent possible, do not leave anything of value in the car, not even in the trunk. Transporting items from point A to point B is one thing, but if you've just come from the store and have items of value in the car, don't take a detour to walk in the park before taking those items home. If you make a stop at another store, don't wait until you arrive at the second stop to then put the items you've purchased in the trunk; you've just advertised to those at that location that you've put a bunch of stuff in the trunk. Put those items in the trunk when you get them and *then* go to your next destination.
- Think of car prowls as shopping. If you go to a store and find nothing on the shelves, you'll go to another store until you find something you want. A car prowler shops at your car. If the prowler window shops at your car and sees nothing there, chances are they will proceed to another car until they find something they want.
- As stated above, an easy and effective deterrent is to let the prowler know they've been seen. If you see someone casing a car, say "hello," wave, or let yourself be seen. Often this is enough to deter the prowler from continuing on. Also call 911 to report the casing as soon as possible.

Thank you for all you do for your neighborhoods. Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

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